

Audibility – Public Event (10.12.2021)

Presenters introduce the various folds of “Audibility” project -namely, its research, educational, artistic making, ethnography, and the radiophonic facets. Keynote presenter Ourania Anastasiadou shapes out the genealogy of Deaf art and provides a “mapping” of key points, concepts and artists, from the 16th century visual representations to the Civil Rights Movement, De’Vies, Gallaudet University, and to the contemporary Greek scene.

Speakers (in order of appearance):

- Yorgos Samantas (TWIXTlab, anthropologist/sound designer, Audibility coordinator)
- Eugenia Vacalopoulou (TWIXTlab, physicist, curator of TWIXTlab radio)
- Ourania Anastasiadou (Athens School of Fine Arts, artist/curator, Accessible Education Department)
- Panayotis Panopoulos (University of the Aegean, anthropologist, scientific advisor for Audibility)
- Dana Papachristou (University of Thessaly, composer/musicologist, educational coordinator)
- Tatiana Remoundou (visual/video artist, educator, collaborating artist)
- Lambros Pigounis (sound artist/musician, collaborating artist)

Greek Sign Language interpretation: Rozalia Founta, Xenia Nikolakopoulou



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZtcmsaYoc1o>

START OF THE TRANSCRIPTION:

(00:02)



GEORGE SAMANTAS

I welcome you to this event on behalf of TWIXTlab, which is an information event for the artistic collaboration program we are participating in, called "B-Air - Art Infinity Radio".

First of all, I would like to say that we would love to have all of us meet live, in a physical space, to have a social event, but unfortunately, obviously the circumstances of the pandemic don't allow us to do that, we have to do it online.

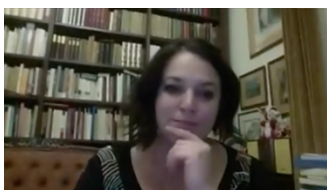
Thank you very much for being here, both the audience, which I really hope to stimulate interest in a conversation immediately afterwards, or perhaps in collaborations in the near future, and of course the dear and dear speakers - whom I will introduce right now:



This is Ourania Anastasiadou, visual artist, curator, key person in the Deaf community, and of course head of the Accessibility Education Unit at the Athens School of Fine Arts.

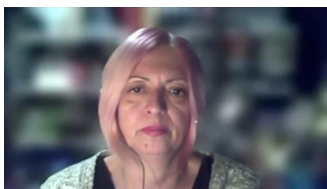


Panagiotis Panopoulos, from the University of the Aegean, who is a Social Anthropologist, specializing in the anthropology of sound, voice, deafness, and with a very special relationship with art.



As well as Dana Papachristou, from the University of Thessaly, with a specialization in Aesthetic Theory, and with particular experience in music and art education.

-I'm not sure if I'm talking too fast ... for sign language, I mean, for interpreting. All good, super!



And of course, we are together with Eugenia Vakalopoulou, who is a friend and partner at TWIXTlab and curator of our web radio, as well as Natassa Hadji, who is the hidden heroine of TWIXTlab's zoom sessions.

And of course I would like to thank very much our interpreters for today, Xenia Nikolakopoulou and Rosalia Founta.

It may be useful to introduce TWIXTlab, since some of you may not know us, so that's the first thing I'll do, and then I'll talk very briefly about the B-Air project, and a little bit more about our contribution there, and we'll discuss that with our guests. Our contribution is called

Audibility, and it's about accessibility and inclusion of Deaf and hard of hearing people, especially teenagers, in the art of sound, music and radio.

So, about TWIXTlab: TWIXTlab is an organisation whose main field of interest is contemporary art and social sciences, particularly anthropology, especially in a way that they are intertwined and relate to everyday life.

In legal terms we are a Non-Profit Company, we were founded in 2015, and since then we have been involved in research, artistic creation and education where these areas meet, in a way that we believe improves people's lives.

When I say that "we are mainly concerned with education", we are concerned with adult (life-long) education, so the programme we are presenting, which is initially for teenagers, is also a challenge for us. It is also a challenge because it is the first programme for which we have managed to get some funding.

In this context, we have been working systematically with sound, since 2015, with sound art, with sound theory, with sound studies, with artistic applications, techniques, concepts, through talks, workshops and educational curricula.

Of course, the sonic medium, and in particular the internet radio, was also a key means of overcoming the restrictions imposed by COVID. Therefore we started in the hard lockdown, the year before last if I am not mistaken, an internet radio which was curated by Eugenia Vakalopoulou, who is here "next to me", who will also tell us a few words about the project herself.....

(5:12)



EUGENIA VACALOPOULOU

Good evening from me, I am Eugenia Vakalopoulou, member of TWIXTlab. I am a physicist, so my relationship with sound starts from science, and I try to combine together with all the members of TWIXTlab the art of using tools and new technologies that

contribute to the transmission of sound.

We use the internet as a means of transmission, but this does not exclude other peculiar constructions of broadcasting on the airwaves. My personal experience as a show producer for several years, my love for the medium of radio, and my collaborations with TWIXTlab members and other artists, resulted in, as George said, a series of shows, the main achievement of which was last year in February, a month of radio shows, which several of them managed to break the traditional commercial way of setting up a show, flirting with the traditional commercial way of setting up a show, and also by "flirting" with idea of the medium of radio as art.

The challenge of using radio in relation to this programme is very big, and we are very interested, and of course we are open to suggestions and partnerships.

Thank you!

(6:50)



GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you very much Eugenia.

Speaking of proposals and collaborations, I see that I forgot - I actually saw that while I was talking - that our two initial collaborating artists for the programme, Tatiana Remoundou and Lambros Pigounis, came with us, I think they will also say a few words to us right afterwards. But I'm going to take a step back to talk a little bit about how this all started.

So when my friend, colleague and actually my old professor in Anthropology of Sound, Panayotis Panopoulos - whom you met a while ago - proposed to us to participate in a proposal to the European Union for the cultural cooperation programmes *Creative Europe* together with other notable organisations, theorists and artists from Europe and, eventually, from the Western Balkans, we accepted with great enthusiasm. And we succeeded, that is, we co-constructed under the coordination of RTV Slovenia (the Slovenian public broadcaster) the programme called, as we said, *B-Air: Art Infinity Radio*, subtitled *Music for Babies, Toddlers and Vulnerable Groups*.

If I may, I'll make a parenthesis here: we attempted to translate *B-Air* into sign language, and we came to the conclusion that a fairly successful title would be [sign gesture "Beta + air"]. I don't know if it's successful, but we might have a chance to repaint it perhaps.

And of course our proposal to the European Union was accepted, and we managed to get into this Creative Europe co-funding programme for 3 years (2021-23).

Our contribution, as TWIXTlab, as we said, is entitled *Audibility*, the ability of a person (or an object) to be heard.

And for the first year of the *Audibility* programme we applied and managed to get the financial support of the Ministry of Culture and Sports until 2021, until the end of the year.

Now, to talk very briefly about B-Air, it has radio as a common thread. As a medium of communication, a warm medium as it is often called, which has the ability to build up communities, or communities of listeners, to inform and entertain, to keep company by carrying voice, sounds and music, overcoming physical distances.

And of course radio as a medium of artistic creation, through which through artistic creation itself, what "radio" means and what can be played on it can be transformed.

(10:45)

Now our international partners are dealing with various topics, ranging from architecture and sound to, say, journalism, while their parallel projects, which meet at B-Air, have in common the social character of radio and have to do with vulnerability.

[...] We are talking about radio for infants and toddlers, hospital radio -especially for children's hospitals- some inclusion radio programmes in cooperation with nursing homes, a thematisation of the sound of trauma -e.g. our colleagues from Bosnia-Herzegovina are investigating the sound of the siege of Sarajevo, and so on...

So [we obtain] a more social, socially oriented approach, with a logic of addressing and including social groups and events that are (or can be considered) traumatic. Let's say, we assume an interventionist position, our actions have a character of social intervention.

(13:8)

More or less in this context and with these partners we developed our own action-plan , starting from an attempt to remove a central stereotype that deaf people do not have access to sound. And our thinking is driven by the following assumptions: that on the one hand deaf and hard of hearing people have access to sound but in a different way from the majority of hearing people; that technology offers us a wide variety of tools to overcome any sensory barriers and indeed that younger generations have much easier access to the relevant technologies; that the senses, at the field of phenomenology, are complementary and that this is also systematically reflected in the genealogy of artistic genres within the history of art; and that we have to take into account the fact that we are not just talking about the senses, but also about the history of art.

I believe that the guest speakers will go into all of this in much more detail. I just put in some bullets. And to make a long story short, let me also tell you what we have in the programme of activities in the next few years.

(14:45)

We initially thought of organizing collaborations, creative meetings between special schools for the deaf and hard of hearing with artists who use relevant media to share their artistic tools and gradually formulate an educational methodology in related fields. We are planning four semesters of schoolwork, i.e. workshops over a period of two years, for which we have already been in contact with two artists. Tatiana Remoundou and Lambros Pigounis have spoken to you before, and they are also here with us, from which artistic works will also emerge, which will be made with the participation of students and teachers. Now in this context we hope to soon have a material documenting the first actions, the ones we are already doing at school with Tatiana, in which our methodological approaches so far will be recorded. In addition, the programme will include a residency programme from next year, in which we will welcome one or more artists from abroad, or researchers or journalists, probably one of the other partners anyway, which will give the project an international dimension of publicity, cooperation and the possibility of mobility, so to speak. So we are talking about a research, educational, artistic and interventionist project. And we really hope that it will be of interest to you and that it will inspire you to tune in, to tune in possibly to the radio, or to "radio" [he makes the sign of the quotation marks with his hands] in the open, metaphorical sense of the term. And I think because I've talked enough it's more interesting to listen to Ourania Anastasiadou, who will also talk at length about the genealogy of the art of the deaf and its history.

Ourania, the floor is yours!

(16:50)



OURANIA ANASTASIADOU

Do you see me all right? I'm going to talk a little bit like a myrrh-eater, I say this for Xenia, our interpreter, because I want to touch on several projects rather than talk. At first it was suggested that I should talk in general about the relationship between education and deafness in general and deaf education in particular, but in the end I preferred, through the works I will show, to refer to events that are relevant to the community. That is, the way these works are linked to characteristics of the deaf community.

(17:56)

The question that arises in contemporary artistic production that concerns deaf people and artists with disabilities or people with disabilities in general is whether a work exists and is characterized as a deaf work. There is a bit of a difference of opinion and the way exhibitions are curated because very often there are exhibitions that have no curatorial consistency. They are made and I would say stuffed and bagged by disabled people without it showing at all in the work itself that it comes from a disabled person. And now say more of course about the deaf. To paint, say, a bunch of flowers, does not show us at all that this person is deaf. If this work that has been produced captures deafness, that is where we can talk about a deaf art. That is, if it has any connection, relevance to the community, with characteristics and a dialogue with the community and with the characteristics of the community or deafness itself.

I'm going to go a little back in time. In 1980 there's a university in America, Gallaudet University, in Washington. That's where this issue was first raised. Thousands of people came from all over the planet and it was raised for the first time whether there is an art that expresses deafness.

Let me say a few words about this university that is quite important to communities worldwide. It is a university where deaf students come from all over the planet and the faculty themselves are deaf. So there, at this first festival called deaf way, a manifesto was also posted, in which for the first time the experiences that deaf artists have and... how they are being represented visually were brought to the forefront. Here I must say that this manifesto does not at all stand on the visual and plastic elements of the works.

(21:28)...

Even the deaf themselves, because I have travelled and talked with them, very often do not refer to their own work by identifying it with a movement. That is, perhaps very few of them consider themselves to be part of a general visual arts movement.

I'll start from quite a long time ago. I'm going to show works from this period of *De' Via*, which was a very powerful movement and at the same time it was a social movement, because along with all these artistic works that were produced there was a tumultuous movement, not just a trade union movement, which talked about the acceptance of sign language and the acceptance of deaf people, which erupted in Washington and swept the deaf movements all over the planet.

(22.40)

So I'm going to go ahead and show you a very old engraving. So we have some prints from the 1600's... Here obviously is a print of the finger alphabet of... English sign language. What is the finger alphabet and to be clear to people who are not involved in the community, it's just the alphabet. The meanings themselves are not created by letters, but by handshapes and the characteristics are the orientation the palm takes, the movement the palm takes, the repetition, the space and time in which that meaning is created. Too often people think that the person who is signing is writing letters in the air. This is not true. He writes words; *he writes*, anyway, he creates.

Here we have a book from the 1600's again with lip morphs.

A stunning 16th century alphabet.

And this is a loan, even though it's a very, very old print, it's a loan that was used by both hearing artists and deaf artists, because the concept of shadow and the imprinting of hand shapes on the wall is very often of great interest to visual artists working on these issues.

So here I show one of the first deaf artists who started working on sign language. Original works, but of great importance for the history of visual artists and deafness. This particular

artist, **Ralph Miller** was deaf from birth, lived in America, made very great history because, as you can see, he began to capture in his paintings the movement of the hands to convey meaning.

I show you a second piece, which emphasizes the fact that the way perception works in the deaf person is vision. That is, we saw this very well in the book by Oliver Sacks, who referred to the perception of the deaf, where in place of the eye is the ear, the main perceptual organ. Ralph Miller had a daughter who surpassed him in fame. She is **Betty Miller**.

Here you can see one of her most important works. Miller, a true pioneer, had other characteristics. Because I have met her and she was a close friend and mentor, she would often say to me: "I'm a bit of a joke because I'm a former alcoholic, deaf and lesbian. The only thing I'm not is being black in America." This piece, one of the first pieces she made, is the first headphones that deaf people wear and all the traumatic history they experienced with sign language being banned in schools. This is also true of the Greek educational reality. That's why all of us who work in the community understand very well and remember that today's deaf elders went through very traumatic experiences in school and there was indeed a violence, violent behaviour against those who sign. Very often, children were only forced to sign in secret during recess.

(28:08)

On the same theme, Miller butchers the hands that sign... And here's a series of works she made, where again here we see the first hearing-aids and the way they were huge, as you can see, they didn't have the elegance of today. You can see here in the mouth the lines. He did a very long series where he likened deaf people to muppets. Because they were forced to learn to speak. And...

This is Betty Miller. She has recently passed away. So her early works were about education, language itself, deaf rights.

Here's also a very old play of hers, in which the central figure is herself and around her are deaf activists who have come together in Washington, D.C. to demand all the things I'm talking about and she shows them in their masks, as I said before...

On the left, there is an ear rattling play and it's about how much pressure the deaf were under at the time. It's probably not too much right to talk to the past, because these things are still happening, which is to say that the sign language path is not completely free today. There are too much pressure put on families. I have nothing to ... accuse against the oral educational method, or the bilingual educational approach, there are just very big and interests and movements which are totally against sign language. On the right you also see a project that... is a small installation with the first headphones.

(31:05)

Here's a more graceful, I would say, work, which for the first time -don't forget that when these works were made a long time ago, in the '60s and '70s, there wasn't this unity between the art movements, nor did these artists have so much experience in showing these works or producing them in another medium. So it's an attempt to render the movement inherent in language painterly. Okay, we all understand that it's about the flower.

Miller's work again.

Here a work of her father. This was done quite old, in 1980. Okay, I don't think it's strictly a painting. It's more of an applied work, and so it shows one thing that we're very familiar with in the community: the visit of the philanthropists into the classroom and where the teacher lifts up the deaf student to show the philanthropists how clearly he speaks. Because one of the

demands in education, very often, of those who do not support bilingual education or sign language as a first language is that children and students anyway are able to articulate too clearly, rather than understand the content of what is being said.

(33.04)

Here though... sorry for the quality of the work, unfortunately I don't have a better resolution. This is the last work of Miller, who was working too much in neon by the end of her life. And her last works had all the... she was creating everything with neon rods.

Here I show you a work by... **Ivey** from 1993. It's typical, I don't know if you can see in the corner downstairs a little kid who has been locked in the school bathroom in detention and outside are the famous custodians. They are not the curators, not our curators, but the curators of the boarding schools for the deaf, which boarding schools, in which schools, because many children in Greece, very importantly, because the schools were concentrated in the big cities and in Athens in particular there was for many years a single institution that gathered children from all over the province, these children were uprooted from their homes and lived in boarding schools. This of course had the traumatic part and the amazing thing is that it was there that these children came into contact with sign language for the first time and learned it. So here, since we said that we would also talk about education through the projects themselves, we have a community that has the following paradox: it is the only community of newborns, infants, children who do not learn the language factually, they do not learn the language from their parents because a huge percentage, 98-99%, of deaf children have hearing parents. This of course means sometimes a very long delay in language development and we have, as I said, the paradox of these children learning their language, their natural language, when they arrive in a school environment. But this can also happen at six, at five, at seven. Therefore, one of the modern trends is early intervention for deaf children.

So here I'm going to show quite quickly paintings of people who belong to the community and let me say here that I'm not showing works that concern me, I mean, that concern my personal aesthetic criteria or my tastes, to put it very popularly, but works that have made history in the community itself.

(shows projects)

(36:40)

Ann Silver is one of the deaf visual artists who... how shall I say, was recognized as a conceptual artist. So here you see a piece of her work, in which she has tampered with the cereal box and written "Deaf with a capital D" underneath. What does "Deaf with a capital D" mean? What does "deaf with a capital D" mean? It means not the deaf person hearing, not the deaf person physically, but the deaf person who has acquired a cultural identity. That's one of the huge issues within the community, how much does a person develop that identity and become a capital K deaf person? You'll even see this in the written word, when that person has identified with the community and has transformed into a deaf person with a consciousness it's listed in the written word with a capital K.

Again a Silver project, where in that box of crayons, with the, I forget the word now, with the pastels, there are various features of the community, such as deaf signer, hard of hearing, post-lingual deaf, pre-lingual deaf, blind deaf and CODA. These are what I would call subgroups within the general community. The prelingual deaf and the postlingual deaf are the deaf person who was born deaf and the deaf person who lost their hearing later on, so they had in a sense caught up with the spoken language of their country.

Silver again with puns on readymades. (For the interpreter, readymades are ready-made, [found] objects, which Silver manipulates and relates them to community issues).

So here we see a feature: typically let's say for example, sorry, that the word deaf is the right way to refer to it and hearing loss is the wrong way to refer to it, or to say, say, a hearing impaired person, because deaf people themselves, especially deaf activists, don't consider themselves a disabled community, or a minority, but they consider themselves just a linguistic minority. In the extreme forms of some people within activist communities.

Also a well-known painter, **Chuck Baird**. Here we have various meanings and an attempt again of hand movement, as I told you about earlier works.

Other performance of the hands.

(40.45)

And here, **Bruce Nauman**. What's going on here now? There are several artists who have been inspired by the lip forms of signification (lip-reading) and made works without an absolute connection. Here very often we see the deaf communities loving and borrowing these works and giving them interpretations that perhaps were not the artists' intentions, but on the other hand,

Here's a very well-known, I think it's a prize-winning work at the Biennale. As you understand, hands play a primary role in visual production.

Here this work exists in the garden created by **Niki de Saint Phalle** in Italy.

Biennale of the '20s.

Here's a quote from Louise Bourgeois, which I can really say that expresses very, very, very many deaf people, both visual and non-visual, that the way they work, that is, because it's the hands that produce the language of a deaf person, you understand how important it is in relation to his or her being Deaf.

I want to refer very quickly to the work of **Zmijewski**, who at documenta made a choir of deaf people and showed it in a church, singing an oratorio. So we have for maybe the first time I would say a sound which is internationally called *deaf voice*, we'll see it later in Tatiana's work, which is the idiosyncratic way in which deaf people speak because they can't hear their own voice.

(43.31)

Here we have the way in which **Criccell** produces conceptual work. He lives in America, he's not very much identified with the community, he teaches at the university, and here we see a work where there are everyday notes that have to do with his relationship to deafness and language per se. I hope **Tatiana** will talk about the project. I'm not joking. I will let Mr Panopoulos analyze the work. I don't know whether he has, did he intend to show the work per se or just talk about it and if I can keep up with him.

(the work plays, the word "feel" is repeatedly heard)

(45.13)

So, Tatiana made a project in which she invited people from different countries to articulate the word "I feel" and filmed their mouths to show how she perceives the world she communicates with. For her, lip-reading is very important. So that whole difficulty of having to focus on mouths, which mouth becomes a huge thing in communication for her and having to read it. She wanted to show her everyday life. So she filmed the mouths... to show her perceptual everyday life, so we see the different mouths saying the word "feel" each mouth in its own language. Here I would like to show that Tatiana, in making this video installation that

had the sound track you heard at the beginning, constructed a whole patent together with her fellow student **Maria Katevatis**. I think these photographs are important because they tried to film the way the eyes and the mouth move, very important elements in language because they are what form and express punctuation marks and many other grammatical features of language. The grammatical features, the grammatical elements of language are rendered in sign language for the most part by the eyes, the lips and by various, I would say, facial movements. We see here the patent.

Here is also a pioneering artist who is no longer living, who with her little pen always made handles. She is an important woman in the community because she has been the art teacher of so many, many deaf children who are now adults.

Here a loan from a listening artist.

Very quickly I show you some works by **Manolis Antonakis**, who created figures whose only feature that remains on the whole body are the eyes, emphasizing the visual skill. The mouth is absent, the ears are absent. Several times even the limbs are missing. I don't want to get into psychoanalytical interpretations now, enjoy the works.

(shows projects)

(49.10)

Sophia Zaga spoke very much about the times she experienced as a deaf person. She also uses the palms. We're talking about an expressionistic way of performing. She's Greek, she lives here.

Ears, eyes, hands, we see very often that they are very important elements.

Maria Katevati, who again decided to remove members, but also to close the visual path.

(shows projects)

All deaf and deaf artists. Here we see all the collaboration that went into the work that **Philip Chatsis**. Young people, young people from the Fine Arts, from the Technocal University (the then called TEI), and from a German university who had come to Greece at the time, collaborated in order to create first a photographic section, and then under scale, for Philip to render meanings in paintings with a, what can I say, schizophrenic photographic realism. It's not a photograph, it's an oil.

(shows projects)

I don't want to bless my self, but I decided to show a piece of my own work from the past, called *Mater*, and you will tell me why a chair, a bed and why all these little beds and little chairs on a scale have anything to do with deafness. As I started my talk, there is in some artists an indirect connection with deafness. This work is called *Mater* and it refers to the fact that deaf mothers in my time did not know fairy tales in order to tell them to their children. What is happening? As I said, the deaf community, sorry, the deaf child does not have the same language as the hearing mother. So very often the hearing mother cannot tell these stories to the deaf child. Very rarely, that is to say, in those years the deaf knew the traditional fairy tales, so that when they became adults they could pass them on to their hearing or, it doesn't matter, to their deaf children, so that they invented their own ways to occupy their own children, other ways than the usual ways of the hearing parents. Anyway, the whole story of the absence of traditional fairy tales within a deaf family is what this work is about.

(53:31)

Too many of the works are graphic and have to do with either signing or the finger alphabet. This, for example, is about children's stories and we see the rabbit and the frog and the hand shapes that create the rabbit and frog meanings.

Other graphic works, related to sign language.

Here are projects made by the children at the deaf institution. While the school of the deaf institution was still in operation. It's no longer there.

And I'm going to talk very quickly because I'm going to leave space for Panos Panopoulos to tell you in detail. Well, I'm making a copy again for vimeo so you can watch it at your leisure... Well, I'll do it later. I want to talk about a project that was a collaboration between three institutions, the Unit, the Roof and the American Embassy, where **Christine Sun Kim**, who is a sound artist, was invited and she spent fifteen days with us, during which we all worked together, about twenty people, you can imagine, and we created works, I'm sorry I'm completely stuck on the power point... Do I have time?

GEORGE SAMANTAS

You got it, you got it, we're not gonna cut you. Be aware that vimeo I wrote the link manually because I realized it was a picture.

OURANIA ANASTASIADOU

Yeah, I saw it too. Well, just a minute. Okay? Okay. I don't know why this is stuck now and what's going on. Okay. Anyway, Christine came to Greece and worked with a mixed group of artists, both deaf and hearing, from many, many disciplines. What was very, very important was a trip we took, I think, of three days to Hydra where Christine gave all the artists a framework to work in and they worked as a group in relation to sound and its transformation, as we said, into a visual phenomenon. There was also an exhibition at the Roof. Here you can see the groups working. I should of course say that a huge role in one of the works was played by the fact that Panopoulos Panos brought a hundred bells which acted as a catalyst in creating a wonderful work. Here are Panopoulos' bells.

(Sound plays)

(57:50)

I think he will talk to you in detail, I hope. One of the works produced was in the water trying to communicate between a hearing person and a deaf person. Excuse me... The two works were in opposition, it was a group work. All the groups were mixed. I will say that everyone spoke of an important experience, because they were able to get to know each other by living together for all those hours and to understand each other.

And I will conclude with a programme that is in a sense based on the same axis as what is being done at the moment. We worked for a year with five different groups from five different countries. The five different groups of deaf children naturally spoke a different sign language. The first meeting country, which was Greece, and the first day, we decided to invite the children, we worked with artists, theory students from the Theory Department and students and graduates from the Visual Arts Department of the Fine Arts plus actors plus deaf animators, we worked to welcome these groups, to put them in a different context, not so touristic when they would arrive in Greece and not so, how shall I say, stereotypical, like having them paint etc. So we welcomed them on the first day, as soon as they arrived in Greece, at the installation of **Antigoni Tsagaropoulou**, with whom we worked, as I said, for almost a year to prepare it, and the children came inside *Fluffy*, the hybrid library that Antigoni created in 2018 at the Atopos cultural space in Metaxourgeio.

(plays video)

(01:02:36)

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you very much, I think it's a very dense sketch of a genealogy, so to speak, of deaf art, if we can call it that, up to today and up to here, up to Greece, so to speak. I don't want to say too much to give the floor to Panos to continue, because we've spent a little bit of our time.

URANIA ANASTASIADOU

Thank you!

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you, and I hope you can sit down at the end for any questions and, if not, I hope we're able to cope.

URANIA ANASTASIADOU

Here, I will be represented by Mr Panopoulos (laughs).



PANOS PANOPOULOS

Good evening, what can I say. I am really absorbed in the presentation that Ourania has given us. Wonderful, really, and in fact the key presentation of the evening. Very little I want to talk about, Ourania gave me so many passes, which unfortunately I don't think I have time to address them all. I have planned to address three

specific points, in which I will also try to incorporate some of the themes that also emerged from Ourania's presentation.

My name is Panos Panopoulos, I am an associate professor at the Department of Social Anthropology and History of the University of the Aegean and my specialization is the anthropology of music and dance, with a special interest in sound in general. And it is precisely this interest in sound that turned me to the study of the world of the deaf, the study of deafness and the study of deaf communities. Starting by learning Greek sign language, then taking some American Sign Language courses, and gradually getting into it precisely because of my interest in the relationships of a particular community of people to sound, getting more and more into the territory of deaf artists, who, combined with a wider interest of mine in encounter, in relationship, in the relationship between anthropology and art, these two interests combined and so I found myself working with people working on this issue, deaf artists working with sound and with voice, both in Greece and abroad. Among them I would mention first and foremost Tatiana Remoundou, who we will soon see speaking or signing to us, and Christine Sun Kim, two artists whom Urania mentioned earlier.

(01:05:50)

The subjects I had been working on before I turned my interest in deafness were improvised singing with fieldwork in Naxos, I have been working on animal bells, especially their symbolism and their voices, hence the bells you saw in a video that Urania showed us, and it was also a contribution in some way to this workshop with Christine Sun Kim. I've been working on issues that have to do with the recorded voice, with the technology of recordings, but also, as I said, things that are at the intersection of anthropology and art. The turn to research in the world of the deaf had to do with what we might call a particular phenomenology. What does sensory or somatic phenomenology mean? What does this special relationship that people who cannot hear develop with sound mean? What kind of relationship is it that develops? Because one of the basic lessons that both deaf people, and especially hearing people, learn from this kind of engagement is precisely that our relationship with sound is something that goes far beyond the auditory sense and is fundamentally about our sense of sight, vibration, touch, physicality and mobility in general. This was and remains my main interest and what turned me towards working with deaf artists. I was not primarily interested in the issue of disability, or the issue of identity politics, very basic issues for deaf communities, highlighted

through Urania's presentation, but I was primarily interested in this particular relationship of a community that cannot hear with sound as an embodied and multisensory experience.

The three topics that I want to venture into today, mainly to focus on our project, a project that came out of an invitation that I had from a colleague from Slovenia who knew of my special interest, a fellow anthropologist, and he suggested that I, in principle, and the partners that I would propose to take on the deafness part of this research, the *Audibility* project. I accepted with great pleasure because it was a way for my scientific interest to be transferred to an educational applied context and fortunately I had and have the pleasure of having such important interlocutors and partners in this process: Ourania Anastasiadou, Giorgos Samantas, Dana Papachristou, I don't want to say more names so as not to forget someone, and of course the artists who were immediately interested in participating, Tatiana Remoundou and Lambros Pigounis and others and others, give me the very great satisfaction that a concern that, in my opinion, is very interesting both scientifically and politically finds a field of application in the field of education.

So I come to the points that I want to emphasise in relation to the programme today and the first of these is the relationship between audibility and visibility. I would say that visibility, to be visible, to be seen in the public space, we could say that it has an analogy in the world of hearing: to be heard, to be heard in the public discourse. In these two dominant senses, in which being heard, being seen, being seen highlights precisely the fact that the senses, in addition to being channels of sensory communication with the world, are also channels and metaphors with a very important, powerful and political dimension.

(1:10:46)

Deaf people have, in my opinion, clearly gained a visibility nowadays and this is shown in the fact that sign language is, I think, that the general population is very familiar with sign language, watching translations in the news, in the parliamentary broadcasts and so on. Much less, I think, has the culture of the deaf gained public visibility - language is obviously a part of culture, but it is not the whole of it. Deaf culture is much less visible but, nevertheless, it could be said that deaf people continue to remain a **silent minority**, as one historian of deafness calls them. Here he is obviously making a play on words for a silent majority, we often use this term to talk about majorities. So in this case we could talk about a silent minority.

The second point I would like to emphasize has to do with the commonplaces that dominate around us, around the world of the deaf and their relationship with sound; this idea that dominates our common discourse, that deafness means a non-relationship, an absence of relationship with sound. I would like to stress that this is a mistake. Deaf people are not a group that has no relationship with sound, but they are precisely a group that has *another* relationship with sound, which can be very revealing of what sound can mean on so many levels, not only for deaf people, of course, as I think I said a moment ago, but also for hearing people; that **sound for all of us is much more than an experience of hearing**, or an experience of hearing. And I think, on that level, research with deaf artists working with sound or voice is really revealing.

And the third point is the issue of **deaf voices**, the deaf voices or the voices of the deaf, Ourania mentioned this, and particularly through the title and the content of a very interesting work by Tatiana Remoundou, which I must say is a very, very central point in the way I think about these issues that I am talking to you about and that I have been very involved with, I've written about it quite a lot and I'll leave, of course, Ourania has said quite a lot, I'll leave even more to be said perhaps by the artist herself, Tatiana, who will talk to us in a moment. What I would like to say about deaf voices, about the voices of the deaf, is that here we are dealing with the subversion of another myth, another illusion about the world of the deaf, which I could say is summed up in the still continuing use, unfortunately, of that very misplaced word, the word *deaf-mute*; a word where the symbolic association of speech with speech and the stilted speech

of the deaf reduce the deaf to dumb beings. We understand the very important symbolic and political dimensions of this issue, which is also related to the controversy, I can't go into details right now, but in the discussion we can say some things, and Ourania mentioned the controversy between the **Oralists and the Manualists** in the history of deaf education. Deaf people of course have sign languages all over the world and of course they can speak and do speak the languages of the hearing majority. But the fact that they have a voice, that particular, often discordant voice, but one that can reveal so many things about what voice ultimately means to all of us, will be something that we will have to connect to the other, multiple dimensions of voice, which we use as a metaphor to say that a group has a voice, has a point of view, has power, etc. So I'm particularly interested in bringing up the issue of deaf voices, both on a literal level and on a metaphorical level, mainly through a question that I try to raise in various ways in actions, texts, artworks, etc., which has to do with where and how we would recognize the voice in sign languages, right? We can naturally think of the voice in voiced, spoken languages, as the sound of the voice is the background of speech. But how could we think of the voice, what would be the phonetic-ity of sign languages?

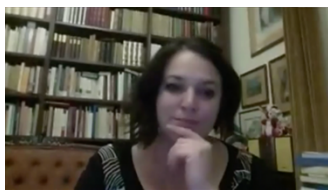
(01:16:35)

I conclude, then, my report on this point with two questions, which, in my opinion, are thus guiding threads in the work we want to do in research. So where does the voice of sign languages lie, and what do the voices of the deaf tell us about the way we hear the voice and speech of the hearing? What do we learn about language and communication in general by listening to and watching deaf people speak and sign? And with these two questions I stop, thank you all very much for your presence tonight and for your interest and I look forward to listening, so with great pleasure and interest, to the other speakers. Thank you.

(01:17:30)

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you very much, Panos, I think you're creating a very nice conceptual design and you're laying a very nice background, as you used the word very nicely, for where we move and how we think and how we approach the field. Again, I don't want to take too much time and I'm going to go straight to Dana. Dana are you here? Here she is.



DANA PAPACHRISTOU.

I'm here. Hello, good evening from me to all and sundry. I am very happy to be here and I am very happy to have listened to my colleagues and their speeches, which were very interesting. My name is Dana Papachristou, I am a lecturer at the University of Thessaly, at the Department of Creative Media and Cultural Industries and I am also a sound artist, musician, music educator and TWIXTlab collaborator. Now I will talk about some of our thoughts on the field and as the person in charge of the educational program of B-Air and very soon I will describe the main part of the program where we are with George Samantas and the artists who participate through his field, which is the school. Let me first say that we started to plan the educational part of the program with in mind how to address the issue of **“naturalized” exclusion**. What I mean: the lesson of sound, of organized sound, of music, that is, more simply, like other lessons that presuppose hearing, does not exist in primary and secondary education for deaf and hard of hearing children and adolescents, neither in our country nor in other countries. This creates a paradox. After all, students at these levels in general schools, or in conservatories, do not learn music so that all

of them can necessarily become professional musicians. In the field of education, one teacher, **William J Fox**, who taught at Mary Hare Grammar School from 1962 to 1985, was teaching deaf and hard of hearing children as early as 1975, encouraging them to learn musical instruments. As she said on this paradox, it is obvious that not all deaf and hard of hearing children will be able to develop their musicality in the full sense of the word (or become musicians), but on the other hand, hearing children do not all have the same musicality either. What is needed is to offer children an opportunity to experiment in order to discover what their potential is. His practice as a teacher of music to deaf and hard of hearing people is based on the belief that if we approach the subject of music education and deafness as a human activity, necessary for the emotional development of children and less as an exalted contradiction, then we can say that progress has been made in this educational field. And indeed it is true that music can provide a child, an adolescent, a young adult with emotional education, knowledge about history, which is closely tied to art history, political and social history, aesthetics, philosophy of art. It can also provide theoretical knowledge of composition and the rules of the convoluted tonal musical system, which is often done in conservatories anyway on paper rather than on a musical instrument. Also, with music education children are taught coordination, team building and a whole field is opened up in front of them to explore, in which very often in my experience, when they try, they feel a reward that can lead to further lessons. They are filled with a confidence that if they can master the music, which is framed with a mystery and with an assumed difficulty, then they can master the other lessons. So music very often also acts as a boost for children who may be behind in physics, mathematics and feel they are lacking there; a boost that they are finally getting somewhere. Now, the education of deaf and hard of hearing children in Greece and in other countries today deprives deaf and hard of hearing children of these opportunities.

(01.22.36)

For the *Audibility* project, we thought a lot at the beginning about how to approach this issue. The issue of schools seemed like a good idea from the beginning. On the one hand because we believe very much in the work that can be done at the first two levels of education and on the other hand because schools are still malleable, they are open to new ideas. They do not have the barriers, the entrenchments that we all acquire as adult human beings. So we had the great pleasure of meeting George Antzakas, the director of the School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Argyroupolis, who welcomed us from the very first moment, welcomed us to the school, listened to us, helped us and was open to all these suggestions. We felt from the beginning that we were in the right place and on the other hand we met special teachers there who did their own work and thus made our work easier, such as Xenia Nikolakopoulou who is here with us today in interpretation at this moment, as she has done at the school and we thank her very much for that, the art teacher Vaso Plaskasovitis, as well as the physics teacher, Mrs Simou, with whom we have plans for future cooperation in the next stages of the programme. So our idea was simple and based on two poles. On the one hand to offer empowerment to the children and to make them feel that this field, music, sound is another field to conquer; to instill in them the idea that if they want to do this, or anything else, they can do that, in any case, they can and there are infinite ways to do it; to let them know that there are sound artists who are deaf or hard of hearing and that this has not prevented them from having a wonderful career. On the other hand, we wanted to put them in touch with local artists and have them co-creating sound works with them. In the first semester at the school, which we are going through these months, we were joined by Tatiana Remoundou, who came to the school, met the children, presented her work and is implementing her artistic idea, that is, to create a sound work with the children, which they can listen to, feel, compose and express their impressions through

painting. In the second semester, we will be joined by Lambros Pigounis, who will co-design an installation with the children, based on physical listening, through sound vibrations and visual stimuli. In the third semester, we will focus on various translations, within quotations, sound translated into colours, sound waves becoming spectra, or spectrograms, vibration becoming sound impression and physical sound impression, sign language becoming movement, and technology visualizing through waveforms, either through the MIDI protocol, or other new techniques. And, finally, in the fourth semester we intend to open the program to children and adults and to explore with workshops and constructions different ways of making sound that are accessible to all and everyone. We are still in the field, as you can tell we are still working. We are confronted and confronted with how we can implement our ideas, the artists' ideas, how we can convey our thoughts to the children, how we can stimulate their interest, how to move in the school context and of course how we can put together and implement our educational methodology. So there are few conclusions that I can share with you today, but I would like to end by sharing my impression from the field, which concerns the children of the special school, the Gymnasium and Lyceum for the Deaf of Argyroupoli, that they are talented children, they are intelligent children, they are hungry for new experiences, like all children in adolescence. We also feel that we are building a relationship with them little by little, that we are overcoming the suspicion, perhaps, that may exist towards young people, with hugs, with smiles and we hope to make them understand how much we really want them to start their adult life with all the available resources and with all the roads open in front of them. We want them to understand that no choice is prohibitive for them or for any human being in this world and we want to thank them, even though they are not here with us today, for how much they have embraced us and how much they bring us joy when we see the concern in their eyes. And, finally, to say that as a musician, as an artist of sound, who has also devoted all my school and adult years to both music, composition, theory, practice, and teaching of sound, I believe, and this is central to the program, that this art can be enriched by all these new listening experiences. We are not going to teach children how to approach music as we understand it, but we really want to encourage children to dare to change music by enriching it with their own personal listening experiences, which are unique. That's the little I had to say, I hope I didn't take too much time.

(01:28:47)

GEORGE SAMANTAS

You're fine, you're fine.

DANA PAPACHRISTOU

That's perfect. Thank you very much for listening to me.

GEORGE SAMANTAS

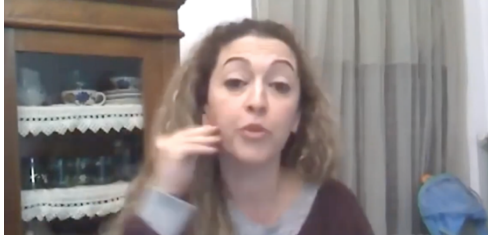
And we thank you very much for telling us and for taking on a very important role in this program and for organizing things to flow so beautifully with the children. I was wondering if Tatiana would like to say a few words.

DANA PAPACHRISTOU

Hello, Tatiana!

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Hello, Tatiana!



TATIANA REMOUNDOU (In GSL, interpreted by Xenia Nikolakopoulou):

Good evening everyone, let me let you know that I don't feel too comfortable speaking in front of people. Some of you I already know. I'm Tatiana, my last name is Remoundou. There are some questions that are on my mind. Mainly to show in a visual way and also to convey my experience as a deaf person what it is like to... experience being deaf. [Okay okay, now?] So I want to convey that experience of being deaf. Together with TWIXTlab we are trying to make a musical composition with the children that is tailored to the unique hearing of deaf and hard of hearing teenage children. Each of us is different and unique, and so is the hearing for each of us. Even more so for a person who does not hear at the same volume or frequencies. So the purpose of the project is to make, through different musical experiments and games, a musical composition and for the children to enjoy this composition in a unified way, without obstacles and interruptions, either physically or visually... Thank you very much.

(01:31:48)

DANA PAPACHRISTOU

Thank you very much!

GEORGE SAMANTAS

We are very excited to be with Tatiana at the school because we see that the children are responding very well. She showed them her works in the first place, she inspired them and we are now moving on to the field, that is, to the more hands on, hands on objects and sounds, I think we are starting to build a very beautiful collaboration. We're looking forward to it. I wish we could present the work... for the Christmas celebration, but that probably won't happen. We'll probably go for January, because of various delays, coronaviruses, you know, all those things that come in between. Just so I'm not dragging it any more, I was wondering if Lambros Pigounis would like to have a word with us, who has a different relationship with all these things.

LAMBROS PIGOUNIS

Good evening from me, can you hear me?

GEORGE SAMANTAS

We can hear you perfectly.

DANA PAPACHRISTOU

Very well.

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you very much for being here with us.



LAMBROS PIGOUNIS

And we thank you for the invitation. Looks like I'll be breaking the library's background habit in the zoom this time (laughs). Well, to be honest I don't have anything very specific prepared to tell you, I'm going to be a bit spontaneous and improvisational. Yes, my existence in this project came after the very kind invitation of, I'll tell them in a series, but it's not exactly this series, of Panos Panopoulos, George Samantas, Dana Papachristou and Ourania, people with whom we have become acquainted, mostly during and after the conclusion of an earlier long-running project in 2016, which took

place at the Benaki Museum and was commissioned by the Neon and the Marina Abramovich Institute. That's basically the crux of how I ended up being here and speaking in this context that has to do with the relationship between sound and the deaf.

This project came as a surprise to me, without even expecting it and without even initially, dare I say, intending to expand into such areas. This project was a long performance, a performance, which included an installation of a large platform on which the audience stood, I'll show you a couple of photos so you can get an idea. And the work was based on very, very low vibrations, in order to place my body in a condition which for me then, maybe even now, and for the human body in general, remains unknown, and I wanted to discover what happens to the body, and to psychology, through being for an extended period of time in such a violent, initially, environment, which in the end was not so violent, but was more revealing than violent, as one would expect. Nevertheless, its conceptualization and symbolism had to do with political and micro-politics and the militaristic use of sound against populations during modern wars. As you can see, I come from a very different background. That is to say, there was a political steadiness to this work. Fortunately for me, this play was visited by Ourania Anastasiadou and Panos Panopoulos and it was these people who revealed to me that the play ultimately had a strong resonance and a great impact on the deaf students of the Fine Arts who did me the honour of visiting me.

(01:37:10)

Immediately after that realization and the fact that I found out who this group was that came to the project and eventually got to know them, some more, some less, immediately after that meeting, my perception of the project, and what I got out of it, changed completely. I realized that the idea, the artistic intention, which was unrelated to the deaf community and was in no way initially intended to create a political or symbolic content related to the deaf community, I discovered, well, that this project had a parallel path, which was related to this community and was not at all negligible, not at all. So I found myself in this context of how sound can communicate and engage with these people. Well, that's what I wanted to mention as to why I exist within this context of the project that we're discussing tonight and why I'm in the guests. Well, however, I would mainly like to talk about the way I think about sound and I think that will justify and make sense of why I'm interested and why I'm trying to do something with George and Dana on this project. The way in which I perceive sound, even though, initially, I have studied violin, I have classical music education, I have done theoretical studies etc., I teach, I'm in the educational institution, I have independent artistic activity etc. So, in all of this, I discover, well, and especially after this project after 2016, that what really interests me in sound as an artist and not as an educator or as a composer, as a creator, is its holistic nature, to say it in English because I think sometimes languages can complement in the meaning of words, of concepts, the universality, its holistic nature that it has in our lives.

I won't make any jokes, because this is a very, very big issue, which I am personally very moved by, and therefore, therefore, I became interested in the concept of noise. Noise, not in the traditional sense, but as a very, very powerful physical force that is related for me to cosmogony, to mythology, to artistic activity and practice, and much, much more. So I am particularly concerned with the holistic nature of sound, the way it exists and is among us and of course such an energy, that is basically the magic word, *sound as energy*, and since we are talking about sound as energy, we cannot separate social groups. It just exists. So nature itself places sound energy in our lives, regardless of our abilities and physical peculiarities, if you like. So the way I personally understand sound - and this explains how I would like to participate in an artistic way and in an educational way, of course, in the project of these children - is sound as energy.

(01:42:00)

To be more specific: not only for me, but for many people, mainly scientists and theorists and more modern, if you like, concepts on the analysis of sound, whether anthropological analysis, artistic analysis, or purely musical analysis, sound is first of all a contact phenomenon. So, sound is a sense of touch first and foremost. So this is the core with which I am artistically dealing with sound and the axis with which I intend to deal and produce within this project. I don't know if I need to go into more detail right now about the idea(s) involved in B-Air, that's mainly what I wanted to say, what I believe about sound as a physical phenomenon. Maybe one last thing that's exclusive to how I intend to participate in this project is that any activity and direction we take with the kids during my participation, which is in the second semester, will be about transforming energies, which means that we'll be dealing not only with visualizing sound, but more generally how sound can be transformed into other energies or other energies can be transformed into sound; and when I say sound, I mean vibration. And when I say vibration, I don't just mean something that we can feel in our body, but the vibration of other objects, etc. I think that's more or less what I would like to say, unless there is some other expectation from George or Dana.

GEORGE SAMANTAS

I think, Lambro, super, besides, if you say too much, on the one hand...

LAMBROS PIGOUNIS

We'll spoil the surprise!

GEORGE SAMANTAS

...the element of surprise is lost (laughs), but, you know, how they say it, sometimes you bring the questions into the field and it surprises you so pleasantly, you improvise with the data you find there. I think you come down with quite open, yet solid ideas and approaches.

LAMBROS PIGOUNIS

So that's all from me.

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you very much, first of all, speakers, people we work with, of course our dear interpreters. I would like to...

LAMBROS PIGOUNIS

I would like to say one thing before I close.

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Of course, Lambro, go ahead, go ahead.

LAMBROS PIGOUNIS

One thanks, perhaps an honor, in a lecture and meeting we had in Fine Arts about this work, a Urania student from Fine Arts, talking about this work and how he experienced it, called me culturally deaf. And it was very moving and I wanted to mention it. That was very moving. That. In essence, it was like repositioning me within a community and... what someone's work can mean without even intending it. That's a very, very big thing. So thank you to all these guys who experienced it and met me and met me and met them. That's it. Thank you very much, now, and good night.

GEORGE SAMANTAS

Thank you, Lambro.



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